



**United States  
Department of  
Agriculture**



[www.usda.gov/strikeforce](http://www.usda.gov/strikeforce)

## Alabama Fast Facts - 2014

State's Child Poverty Rate:	27.6%
State's Overall Poverty Rate:	11.2%
StrikeForce State Since:	2013
Number of StrikeForce Counties:	39
Total Outreach Events:	138
Number of Community Partners:	67
Total USDA Projects:	3,034
Total USDA Investments:	\$242.8 million

## Contacts

Contact us to be a partner, or to learn more about StrikeForce opportunities:

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## Some of Our StrikeForce Community Partners

Alabama Cooperative Extension System  
Alabama Farmers Market Authority  
Alabama Department of Human Resources  
Alabama Resource Conservation and Development Councils  
Small Farmers Agricultural Cooperative  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/  
Land Assistance Fund  
Hunger Solutions Institute  
Tuskegee University  
United South and Eastern Tribes

## StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity

# ALABAMA

Currently, 85 percent of our country's persistent poverty counties are in rural America. More than one third of rural Americans, and one in four rural children live in poverty. Kids growing up in families earning twice the poverty threshold are nearly three times as likely as other children to have poor health, are more likely to finish two fewer years of school, and are more likely to earn half as much money in their adult lives.

Growing the economy by investing in rural communities and increasing opportunities for families is key to our Nation's future. In 2010, Secretary Vilsack established USDA's StrikeForce Initiative for Rural Growth and Opportunity to address the specific challenges associated with rural poverty. Since then, StrikeForce teams have collaborated with more than 500 community partners and public entities to bring targeted assistance to rural areas experiencing chronic poverty.

These efforts have invested more than \$16.5 billion to create jobs, build homes, feed kids, assist farmers and conserve natural resources across twenty states. In 2015, StrikeForce expanded to include Oklahoma and Puerto Rico. Now, USDA StrikeForce teams will operate in 880 counties in 21 states and Puerto Rico. Each StrikeForce project is a commitment to America's economic future.

## StrikeForce At Work

As Executive Director of the Wiregrass Resource Conservation and Development Council, James Currington's job is to help the local agriculture community. He noticed that many hoop houses in the area were approved for construction but had not been installed. After visiting producers, Currington discovered an issue with the kits. Many farmers felt they were too complicated to install, too large for their needs, or simply not a good fit.

In 2014, through a \$50,000 grant from USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Currington tested a new hoop house design. "A new model was needed to fit the needs of limited resource and beginning farmers in addition to models that were already available," Alabama NRCS State Conservationist, Dr. William Puckett said.

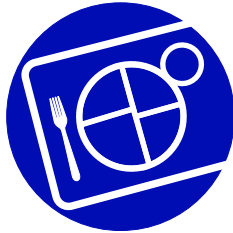
Currington worked with Dr. Victor Khan at Tuskegee University to develop, design and manufacture a new wooden hoop house kit and determine the best installation method. After successfully working with eligible producers, the kits have been installed on 10 farms in Alabama StrikeForce communities, and many more are in the pipeline. Currington believes this model will be more widely used and bring additional opportunities to small-scale producers. "It's one of the most rewarding things I've ever done in my life," he said.

NRCS will now fund wooden hoop house kits statewide through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Small, beginning, limited resource and socially disadvantaged producers will receive priority for the program.



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Jobs Created  
or Saved

## Summer Meals for Kids



Farmers  
Assisted



Home  
Investments



## Conservation Efforts

